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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ECIN](#) [PINR](#) [RP](#) [IN](#)  
SUBJECT: INDIAN PRESIDENT SIGNS AGREEMENTS ON DEFENSE AND  
TRADE DURING STATE VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Joseph L. Novak  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: During a February 3-6 State visit to the Philippines by Indian President APJ Abdul Kalam, the GRP and GOI signed several defense and trade agreements. The defense agreement covers training and information exchanges, while the trade agreements deal with tourism, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals. India and the Philippines have traditionally not been particularly close; President Kalam's visit should help strengthen ties somewhat. End Summary.

12. (U) Indian President APJ Abdul Kalam visited the Philippines February 3-6. During the visit, President Kalam and Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo oversaw the signing of a Defense Cooperation Agreement between their two countries. The agreement, signed on February 4, seeks to promote defense cooperation through exchanges involving military training expertise and information, military instructors and observers, and other military personnel. It also seeks to facilitate contact between the two countries' defense agencies and research institutes in order to promote dialogue on defense-related technology.

13. (U) The GRP and the GOI also signed Memoranda of Understanding promoting closer Philippine-Indian cooperation on tourism, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals. The pact on tourism seeks to increase the (currently relatively small) number of Indian tourists traveling to the Philippines, and vice versa. The agriculture agreement is designed to promote the exchange of agricultural information, as well as agricultural scientists, experts and trainees. The pharmaceutical pact focuses on the availability of low-cost medicines.

14. (U) In an address to the Philippine Congress at the conclusion of his visit, President Kalam pledged his country's broad cooperation with the Philippines on a range of economic development issues. He pointed to several positive steps which India and the Philippines might undertake together to improve mutual national development, including marketing knowledge products, facilitating the rise of small-medium scale enterprises (SMEs), and assisting in the development of large-scale solar farming projects. President Kalam also pledged Indian cooperation in helping the Philippines reform its troubled electoral system.

15. (C) Comment. The visit of President Kalam and the resulting bilateral agreements can be seen as evidence of the Philippines' ongoing focus on developing and strengthening partnerships with fellow Asian states. One senior legislator told us that the GRP wanted to use augmented relations with India as a counterweight to the influence of China, an increasingly looming presence across the South China Sea. There is not likely to be any immediate outcome of the

Defense Cooperation Agreement, but over the longer term we may see increased ship visits and joint training.

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